



The SEQUOIA

BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Volume 25, No. 6

February, 1976

MEETINGS:

FEBRUARY 5, THURSDAY, 7:30 PM BOARD MEETING at the home of Eila and Norman Fox, 51 West Bellevue in San Mateo. Board members and committee chairmen should attend. Other members are welcome.

FEBRUARY 12, THURSDAY, 8:00 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING at the San Mateo Garden Center. The Garden Center is located on Parkside Way--between 26th and 27th Avenues--just west of Alameda de las Pulgas, in San Mateo. The program has not as yet been resolved at this time of our "press" deadline but we have been having some outstanding programs and we are sure this will be a fine one too.

One of the shrubs that brighten the woods early in the year is Oso Berry (*Osmaronia cerasiformis*). It starts blooming in February. It is fairly common in San Mateo County and its range extends from Monterey County in the Coast Ranges and Tulare County in the Sierra Nevada north into Canada. It is our Plant of the Month.

Frank Allen and Charles Newman will have their usual high-quality slides and sounds of the Birdcall of the Month.

If you plan to attend the February meeting and have not provided cookies for a previous meeting and would like to do so, won't you call Eila Fox and arrange to bring some? The "Social Hour" after the meeting is a fine custom.

FIELD TRIPS:

February 8 Sunday 9:00 AM Bayshore

The trip begins at the Bay at the end of Millbrae Avenue, the intersection of Millbrae Avenue and Old Bayshore, by the airport. Bring a lunch if you like. Wetness is a consideration, come prepared. We will go, rain or shine, to see the shorebirds.

Leader: Norman Fox 343-1406

February 28 Saturday Chain of Lakes, Golden Gate Park 9:00 AM

We will meet at the Park entrance, 42nd and Fulton. North Lake should give closeups of a variety of ducks, including (usually) wood duck. Conifers and broadleaf trees afford habitat for a variety of passerines. Lunch is optional; we might continue if the afternoon looks promising. If it rains, we can visit the California Academy of Science for a small fee.

Leader: Byron Davies 334-2851

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FIELD TRIP REPORTS:

Pescadero Marsh, Leader: Andy Kratter

December 13 about 18 people visited Pescadero Marsh on a cold and very windy day from 8:30 to 11:30. An injured Short-eared Owl was found on Highway 1 and was taken care of properly. The following 58 species were seen:

Arctic Loon - Red-throated Loon - Horned, Eared, Western, Pied-billed Grebes - Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorant - Great Blue Heron - Common and Snowy Egret - Bl-cr. Night Heron - American Bittern - Mallard - Gadwall - Pintail - Green-winged Teal - Cinnamon Teal - American Widgeon - Shoveler - Canvasback - Lesser Scaup - Bufflehead - Surf Scoter - Ruddy Duck - Red-breasted Merganser - Turkey Vulture - White-tailed Kite - Red-tailed Hawk - Marsh Hawk - American Kestrel - American Coot - Killdeer - Black-bellied Plover - Common Snipe - Willet - Greater Yellowlegs - Dunlin - Short-billed Dowitcher - Western Sandpiper - Marbled Godwit - Sanderling - Glaucous-winged, Western, Herring, Bonaparte's and Heerman's Gulls - Mourning Dove - Kingfisher - Common Flicker - Black Phoebe - Common Raven - Bushtit - Bewick's Wren - Long-billed Marsh Wren - Robin - Starling - Yellowthroat - Western Meadowlark - Red-winged Blackbird - Brewer's Blackbird - House Finch - Brown Towhee - White-crowned Sparrow and Song Sparrow.

DECEMBER--JANUARY OBSERVATIONS:

At least twelve Northern Fulmars were seen from Princeton Harbor on Dec. 30, and 43 were seen from Pigeon Point Jan. 6. A group of 68 White Pelicans was seen flying from San Bruno Mt. towards Coyote Point Dec. 27. A few American Bitterns were found at a number of places: Pescadero Marsh, Sharp Park golfcourse, Lake Lucerne and the Pilarcitos Creek mouth. At Pilarcitos Creek mouth, Dec. 27, a White-fronted Goose was seen circling over the mouth, then landing. Single Redheads on Pescadero pond, and Lake Lucerne on Jan. 3. A Barrow's Goldeneye was seen at Coyote Point Dec. 26, and another was seen on the bay at Foster City, Jan. 7. An Oldsquaw was seen frequently in Princeton Harbor during Dec. and Jan. Small numbers (2-6) of Black Scoters were found at each of the following places: Pedro Point, Princeton, Pescadero Beach, Ano Nuevo Point and Miramontes Point. A Hooded Merganser was at Pescadero Marsh, Dec. 6; five were on Crystal Springs Reservoir Dec. 25 and 26 were on Marina Lagoon, Foster City, Jan 7. Two adult Bald Eagles were on Crystal Springs Reservoir and San Andreas Lake during early January. Four American Golden Plovers were found in a plowed field in Halfmoon Bay, Dec. 27, and two were in a pasture near Pigeon Point, Jan. 3. Twelve Ancient Murrelets at Pigeon Point, Dec. 7 and 2 at Pescadero Beach Dec. 22 are noteworthy since this species is rarely seen along our coast. Two Cassin's Auklets and 12 Marbled Murrelets were seen from Pigeon Point Jan 3. Seven Rhinoceros Auklets were seen from the same place Jan. 6. A Ground Dove, discovered in Half Moon Bay on Dec. 11 was subsequently seen by many observers (and photographed, Jan. 10) provided the third record for Northern California. A Short-eared Owl was at Ano Nuevo Point, and one was at Pescadero Marsh, both on Jan. 3; another was along the Bay near Menlo Park, Jan. 11. Two Pileated Woodpeckers were found in Portola Park Jan. 3. Extraordinary in winter was a Warbling Vireo carefully studied at the Filoli Estate on Dec. 27. One Hermit Warbler was at Pilarcitos Lake, Dec. 27 and another was seen in the southern watershed area the same day. A Tree Sparrow at Half Moon Bay Dec. 11-30 was the first

found on the Peninsula. Two White-throated Sparrows were in Half Moon Bay Dec. 27, one was at Pilarcitos Lake Dec. 27, one was along Stage Road Jan 3, and one was at Sawyer Camp Road Jan. 7. A Harris' Sparrow was seen at Half Moon Bay Dec. 13--Jan. 10; the second county record. A Swamp Sparrow, very rare in California was at Pescadero Marsh Nov. 22 and 6 were at Pilarcitos Creek mouth Jan. 8. A Lapland Longspur was at Pescadero Dec. 3, one was at Half Moon Bay Dec. 4 and one was at Redwood Shores Dec. 27

-- Barry Sauppe, Sightings Chairman
Phone: 349-3470

CHRISTMAS COUNT SUMMARIES:

Fantastic!! That is the best word to describe both the Crystal Springs count and the Año Nuevo count this year. Crystal Springs had a grand total of 182 species, and Año Nuevo produced 170 species. Crystal Springs has come a long way since its beginning in 1955 when only 125 species were seen. Año Nuevo's previous high count was 161 which was established last year. This only goes to prove that with better participation in the field, more birds are seen, and total bird numbers increase immensely. This year we had 71 observers on the Crystal Springs count! Thank-you everyone for your hard work on both the counts.

Some of the more unusual birds seen on the counts were as follows:

Crystal Springs Red-necked Grebe 1, White Pelican 68, American Bittern 1, Cattle Egret 1, White-fronted Goose 1, Wood Duck 19, Redhead 5, Barrow's Goldeneye 2, Oldsquaw 1, Black Scoter 5, Hooded Merganser 12, Common Merganser 1, White-tailed Kite 36 (high), Red-shouldered Hawk 1, Rough-legged Hawk 2, Golden Eagle 1 (imm.), Bald Eagle 1 (adult), Clapper Rail 8, Virginia Rail 8, Sora Rail 1, Killdeer 1405 (high), Spotted Sandpiper 15 (high), American Avocet 1256 (high), Black-necked Stilt 79 (high), Thayer's Gull 3, Common Murre 2, Pigeon Guillemot 1, Marbled Murrelet 1, Golden Plover 4, Ground Dove 1, Barn Owl 8, Screech Owl 2, Great Horned Owl 27, Pygmy Owl 2, Burrowing Owl 11, Short-eared Owl 6, Saw-Whet Owl 3, White-throated Swift 2, Selasphorous Hummingbird species 1, Raven 6, Crow 3, House Wren 1, Western Bluebird 6 (low) Orange-crowned Warbler 7, Hermit Warbler 2, Wilson's Warbler 1, Warbling Vireo 1, Evening Grosbeak 3, White-throated Sparrow 4, Swamp Sparrow 3, Harris' Sparrow 1, Lapland Longspur 1. There were also 8 other species seen in count period. This means that perhaps next year with more coverage we can top 190 species!

Año Nuevo - Red-necked Grebe 1, Fulmar 7, Shearwater species 1, Brown Pelican 7, American Bittern 4, Wood Duck 2, Redhead 2, Black Scoter 44 (high), Red-shouldered Hawk 1, Rough-legged Hawk 5, Golden Eagle 1 (adult), Ring-necked Pheasant 1, Virginia Rail 8, Sora Rail 10, Common Gallinule 5, Golden Plover 2, Spotted Sandpiper 1, Red Knot 1, Black Oystercatcher 19 (high), Harlequin Duck 4, Thayer's Gull 5, Heerman's Gull 1, Black-legged Kittiwake 4, Common Murre 712, Marbled Murrelet 17, Cassin's Auklet 3, Barn Owl 4, Great Horned Owl 16, Pygmy Owl 7, Short-eared Owl 2, Saw-Whet Owl 8, White-throated Swift 96 (high), Violet-green Swallow 140, Tree Swallow 55, Pileated Woodpecker 2, Raven 2, Crow 2, Dipper 5, Robin 10,805 (high), Townsend's Solitaire 1, Orange-crowned Warbler 2, Tri-colored Blackbird 4158 (high), Red Crossbill 1, White-throated Sparrow 2, There were four other species seen in count period but not on count day.

I will give my thanks again to all those hardy individuals who

trudged through fields, marshes and woods on either or both of the Christmas Counts. See you again next year!

Compiler, Barry Sauppe

AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch is a wildlife sanctuary and education center located on Bolinas Lagoon about three miles north of Stinson Beach on State Highway 1. It is open to the public during March through June. For special visits phone 383-1644. The Ranch is sponsored by Golden Gate, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies.

NEWS FROM THE RANCH by Betty Boyd

The Ranch will be open to the public February 28 through July 4 on weekends and holidays, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Schools and other interested groups can make an appointment for a guided tour by calling Mrs. Edris Cole, 383-1644. The Ranch is closed on Monday.

Winter Clean-up work has been going on apace. Extensive trimming has been done on the trees beneath the rookery. The Walker House has been completely renovated and certain improvements made, while at Volunteer Canyon under the experienced expertise of Clifford Conly the Crum House has been moved, is on a new foundation and remodeling is under way. This is the initial step in the Ranch's plan for the educational center at Volunteer Canyon.

HOST DUTY AT THE RANCH

Sequoia Audubon will provide hosts at the Ranch on Saturdays and Sundays during the period February 28 to April 4. Hosts greet the visitors, direct them to the parking area, see that all visitors sign the register and point out Ranch trails and facilities. No prior experience nor birding expertise is required. Four hosts are needed each day from 9:30 AM until 4:30 PM. Host duty is an enjoyable and interesting experience and provides an opportunity to see an unique and remarkable nature sanctuary with its fascinating heronry, display area, book store, trail and wildflowers.

There will be a sign-up sheet at our February 12 meeting. Put your name down for one or more dates during our duty period.

CONSERVATION NEWS:

The battle to save our environment is a never-ending one, as is now being proved in the case of Suisun Marsh. At the Bay Area Audubon Council meeting January 10 in the Whittell Center at the Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Napa-Solano Audubon Society detailed continuing problems with implementation of the Fish and Game Department's plan for the Marsh. Boundaries have already been modified because of opposition of developers and as many development plans as possible are being rushed for approval by the Corps of Engineers before the Legislature can act on the plan. The Chapter at present is opposing a proposal for development on Chips Island, and a worse plan for a cross-marsh pipeline. Further in the future is the proposed Dow Plant in Solano County near the Marsh, which will be a danger, not so much in itself as in all the other development which it will engender.

Controversy over another marsh area still goes on concerning the proposed fill and development of well over 300 additional acres of former marsh behind the dikes in Foster City. In mitigation the city offers only some 60 acres of marsh outside the dikes along Belmont Slough, claiming it cannot afford to do more. Though this has been ac-

cepted by the State Fish and Game Department, it is opposed by the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service since this mitigation of marsh loss by barely a one-sixth part is far from the usual requirements of equal amounts of other marshland preserved for what is allowed to be filled. Letters supporting the position of the Fish and Wildlife Service on this unequal exchange can be written to

Mr. William Lyons, Deputy Under-Secretary
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Reference should be made to the Estero Municipal Improvement District, Foster City, California, Corps of Engineers Public Notice 74-0-22.

Coastal wetlands also are coming under fire in the policies of the State Navigation and Ocean Development Commission, expressed at a meeting with the Executive Director of the Coastal Zone Conservation Commission, Joseph E. Bodovitz. The NODC questioned the value of wetlands on the West Coast for fish (which they think are no longer important here, either) and it believes wetlands should no longer be protected but should be altered by dredging to serve recreational boating interests. It thus appears that protection of coastal wetlands and estuaries (which the Coastal Commission ranks as important in their own right, aside from any value for fisheries) will require support of Audubon members who should know the value of coastal marshes as well as anyone. Letters can be sent to

Mr. Ernest Kettenhoffen, Chairman
Navigation and Ocean Development Commission
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

The forum on Nuclear energy to be jointly sponsored by the San Mateo County Medical Society and the Bar Association has been given a definite date. It will be held at Canada College on Tuesday evening, April 20, 1976. Save this date to hear both sides of this important issue on which we will all be voting in June.

Word comes from Paul Howard, National Audubon's Western Regional Director in Sacramento, that in spite of the stand of the State Fish and Game Department on the lead shot issue (as reported in OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA and in the last two issues of THE SEQUOIA) National Audubon remains opposed to the use of lead shot in hunting on both the Pacific as well as the Atlantic Flyways, and favors change to steel shot as soon as possible. Detailed reasons for this position will be given in a later issue.

Ruth Smith, Conservation Chairman

BIRDING FROM A KITCHEN WINDOW: By Fran Nelson

I have just heard a beautiful bell-like call from out in front of our house. I do not recognize it, so binoculars in hand I go searching for a bird to go with it. The bird escapes me but since I'm outside I decide I might as well go to the backyard and set the sprinkler on the parched pyracantha. Then I decide to go back to the front yard to give the junipers a drink. As I go about my work I hear the sound of a Killdeer and then a Gull, both overhead. I hear a Golden-crowned Sparrow singing and an Audubon Warbler chipping. Then I hear a California Quail calling. Some of these I hear several times and then I hear a loud

"Wheeeeeeeeeee" that sounds like a New Year's celebrant. All these sounds are really coming from one bird and it's not a Mockingbird. It's a Starling! A Wrenitit calls but that's for real.

Back to the kitchen ---- and my window again! The water is standing in puddles under the pyracantha and eight assorted birds are bathing in them and enjoying a shower. The bird baths are full but they dig this more natural one. There is a combination of tub and shower. There is the shelter of the shrub -- still they can see it and them. It's nice for them we aren't ones to work in peat moss around the shrubs so the ground slurps up all the water instantaneously -- not nice for the shrubs perhaps but fine for a bird bath! A Hermit Thrush alights near the pyracantha. I do a double-take because he isn't flicking his wings and cocking his tail and dropping it slowly. But, he is a Hermit -- he has a nice rusty tail to prove it. He eyes the pyracantha berries but decides on a raisin.

Now it is the next day and it is the kind of day when the warmth of the sun feels so pleasant because the air is quite cool. It would be cold if it were not clear and calm but it is clear and calm and warm in the sun. I can have the door open and hear who comes as well as see. The Hermit Thrush has come a-calling again. Maybe this will be the winter we will have one stay. Sometimes we do. A flock of 7 or 8 Lesser Goldfinches have descended on the rosemary which we have planted especially for the finches and goldfinches. They eat the flower, petals and all! A female Purple Finch lights in the top of the birch. Maybe it's this year's male instead of a female. They are look-alikes at this point. A Red-shafted Flicker's sharp call comes from nearby but I can't see him. A Wrenitit scolds from the cover of a corner planting. I can't see him either but he sounds a little like a rattlesnake.

I have been watering the yard, front and back, and am now setting the hose on the Indian Hawthorn. I hear little skitterings among the fallen birch leaves which we have placed under these shrubs. I talk softly to whomever is there and as usual they stay. The sprinkler is light so I have decided it can go on top of the shrubs this time and I turn the water on gently to give the birds a chance to leave but they don't! Later, I go out to change the position of the sprinkler. They skitter again but stay! If I could see them I'm sure I would see shower baths going on.

I watch the daily forecast now for possible freezing weather. Water is as important as food to the early-arriving birds. Many go first to the water. Also, a Hummingbird without an immediate source of breakfast could well perish. So freezing weather sees me out well ahead of the first birds with a teakettle of hot water for the baths and the hummingbird feeder I had taken in well after the last Humer's visit the night before.

WILDLIFE RESCUE TEAM: -- By Carol Hamilton

From stitching snake skins to splinting birds wings our volunteer organization has been working for almost two years providing first aid and temporary foster home care for injured and orphaned wildlife.

In the winter of 1973 five individuals: Jeanie Collins and Carol Hamilton, Portola Valley; Phyllis Pierce and Virginia Collins of Los Altos, and Sue Scott of Woodside, all experienced in the area of wildlife rescue, came together to form the nucleus of the Wildlife Rescue Team. We volunteered our services to Pets in Need, the Humane Societies, the

Audubon Society and the Junior Museum. The response was overwhelming. Altogether in that year over 300 animals were brought to us for attention. Because of such a tremendous and yearly increasing volume of animals brought to so few capable of caring for them, our group realized that there was a need by a concerned community for the care of wildlife which we soon, as individuals, would be unable to handle.

In an effort to increase the number of trained volunteers, we arranged for a class to be taught in March 1974 at the Palo Alto Junior Museum. Expecting 35 people, more than 144 people showed up for our first class! We were on our way. Since then we have trained 650 volunteers in the care of orphaned and injured wildlife, and have another 175 presently on a waiting list for our spring classes. Why train so many? Because since April 1, 1974 when William Burke, director of animal service in Palo Alto offered us the use of a room at the Palo Alto Animal Shelter, we have registered 2,640 animals for care. We work under rarely given wildlife permits from both the State and Federal governments without which it is illegal to keep wildlife. The permits allow our team temporary custody of several categories of injured or diseased or orphaned animals. Our motto is RAISE, REHABILITATE AND RELEASE.

Ninety percent of our team's patients have been birds, but there have been exotic exceptions: European Polecat, South American Porcupine, Kinkajou, Coati mundi, etc. The problems are always interesting; the gopher snake run over by a lawn mower that was stitched and bandaged by a volunteer veterinarian, the baby squirrel whose teeth curled up and were piercing the roof of its mouth. The squirrel was taken to Dr. James Odergard, a San Mateo dentist, who set aside his practice with humans long enough to drill off the ends of the squirrel's teeth.

There are many fine people who donate their time to the Wildlife Rescue Team for, you see, we can rarely afford to pay for services. The Wildlife Rescue Team is an 100% volunteer group. We are an incorporated non-profit organization. There is no salaried staff nor official funding. We operate solely from donations, class fees and fund-raising projects. The volunteers themselves incur any expenses needed for the care of their patients.

The service of the Wildlife Rescue Team includes a 24-hour emergency care service by trained senior volunteers who are on call. Telephone callers to the Palo Alto Animal Shelter (Phone: 329-2671) are put in contact with the volunteer of the day. From April through September we have volunteers at the Animal Shelter from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday through Saturday.

The Wildlife Rescue Team also works in cooperation with other agencies and groups. The San Francisco Zoo asked for unreleasable water-birds and was given two Pintail ducks. U.C. Davis Veterinary School was sent baby raccoon with unusual brain and eye problem for study. San Francisco Junior Museum was given the South American Porcupine, Kinkajou and Coati mundis. San Francisco Children's Zoo was given the tame European Polecat. The Wildlife Rehabilitation Council asked for help to relocate two retrained formerly captive Bald Eagles (Lady Jane and Silver). Carol Hamilton and her husband flew the eagles, Peninsula Humane Society Officer and the S.F. Zoo Raptor Release Program trainer in their plane to Elko, Nevada where the birds were accepted by the State of Nevada Fish & Game officials at Ruby Mountain Wildlife Refuge.

The U.S. Navy at Moffitt Field used Wildlife Rescue Team Services when oiled birds were found on base and baby Barn Owls were found in hangars. Santa Clara Humane Society and Peninsula Humane Society have referred a variety of mammals and birds for specialized care. Alum Rock Youth Science Institute requested assistance with a recent Botulism outbreak among shore and water birds and was sent teams on a 7-day-a-week basis until the crisis was over. Wildlife talks have been given to public schools, 4-H groups, organizations (Sierra Club, Rotary, Lions, etc.), various Scout groups, and T.V. (Channel 8).

The International Bird Rescue Center, Berkeley, was sent teams to man beaches and the Center during oil spills. In return, the WRT has often used the services of these agencies when specialized care is so indicated. No animal is left overnight at the Animal Shelter: 3-gram Hummingbirds to 85--lb Fauns are cared for in our homes.

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING REPORT -- by Sheila Davies

A "full house" attended the January meeting at the San Mateo Garden Center to enjoy our usual enlightening program. The Birdcall-of-the-Month featured the Cedar Waxwing with sound by Charles Newman and illustrated by Frank Allen's excellent photographs. Jed McClellan showed us the Hazelnut, *Corylus Cornuta*, as the Plant-of-the-Month. He illustrated his description with closeups of the catkins and the female flowers. We saw the natural forms of the bush and the cultivated variety.

"The Snowy Owl, I've heard it said
Lives on the entrails of the dead.
He loves to gorge on rotting bowel
Which ruins him for table fowl." Farley Mowat

The main part of the program was given by Jon Winter, an ornithologist with a special love for owls. He greatly increased our knowledge of not only the Snowy Owl but also all the other owls which may be seen in California. He described the biological details which adapt these remarkable birds for their nocturnal life. Biologists are just beginning to understand how these characteristics assist the owl in survival. Compared to other birds, there is little field data. Perhaps here is another area where the amateur can assist the professional in gathering data. Jon gave us some very practical tips to aid in finding owls. However, he did mention some hazards of "owling." He has almost walked off cliffs in the dark, been trampled by wild pigs, met skunks and rescued a friend who suffered a concussion by walking into a tree. We were introduced to Otis, a voluble Screech owl, through tapes of his voice as he gave his chin-tickle-call and announced the arrival of his arch-enemy, an orange cat. Jon ended his program with a plea for continued vigilance in protecting the habitat of these useful and beautiful creatures.

We hope you enjoyed the January program and will join us for many more. If you weren't fortunate enough to be at the last meeting, we hope you will come to the next one and give your support to these entertaining and informative programs.

COYOTE POINT MUSEUM

The Coyote Point Museum for Environmental Education presents a varied winter class schedule for children and adults, beginning January 29 through March 4, and will concentrate on the study of plants and animals that like the wet, winter season. Rain gear is advisable as

this class will be conducted in, out and around the museum.

Then, on Monday, March 8 and on subsequent Mondays through April 5, the second section will emphasize "Vertebrates"-- bringing frogs, toads, snakes, skunks, squirrels, rabbits, mice, foxes and others of the live museum animals into the classroom.

Children in grades 1 and 2 are being offered a "Surprise Class" to acquaint them with timely and topical proofs of the joys of this season. Details may be obtained at the museum, but this is sure to be fun and the adventurous ones can register immediately.

"Let's Discover!!!" some things about physics, chemistry and animal behavior, is a class geared to grades 3 and up, beginning January 29 through March 4, on Thursdays from 4 to 5 p.m. Class members will be guided around Coyote Point while seeking materials to work with and study.

Once again the museum is offering a college level course in cooperation with Canada College called "The Peninsula -- A Changing Ecology." A series of five lectures and two four-hour field trips will begin February 3. The emphasis will be on plants and animals of the baylands and seashore and their importance to our environment. Guest lecturers include Dr. Diane Conradson, Dr. Bob Hassur, Bob Gill, John Tinsley, Linda Craig and others in addition to museum staff instructors. The lectures will be given from 9:30 to 11:30 AM and the field trips will be established after the class is underway. Registration will be at Canada College, Community Services Division: telephone 364-1212, Ext 236. The fee is \$10.00

The "Ecology" class is required for those wishing to become Museum Docents, trained volunteers capable of providing environmental tours for children and adults. Exceptions will be made only for those persons who already have an extensive background knowledge of the subject matter.

The practical, in-field docent training will be given by the museum free of charge. Seven sessions of Baylands Docent Training, Wednesdays from 9:30 to noon, start February 18. Six weeks of Seashore Docent Training begin on Wednesday, February 25, also from 9:30 to noon, with the first session held at the museum.

Another popular course in Astronomy will begin February 19 and continue through March 25. This class will be of interest to anyone under 100 years of age since it includes observational astronomy and then delves into such far-reaching topics as the origin of the earth and the galaxies, the birth, growth and death of the stars, gravity, space and time. Scouts may earn an astronomy badge upon successful completion of the work. The fee is \$10 per individual or \$12 per family or small group of friends.

The fee for most nature classes for youngsters is \$6 per child, and in some cases, less for museum members. Call 573-2595 for further information.

POTLUCK DINNERS

At the January 8 meeting of the Sequoia Audubon board of directors it was decided that we would discontinue our potluck dinners on an every-other-month schedule. No new schedule was established but it was suggested potluck dinners be held at the June and December meetings.

THE ALEUTIAN CANADA GOOSE

from OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA Nov/Dec 1975

During the 1975-76 waterfowl hunting season there will be three areas in California that will be closed to the hunting of Canada geese. The closures will be in effect to give more protection to the endangered Aleutian Canada Goose.

The federal Endangered Species Act provides not only for the complete protection of an endangered species but that similar appearing or "look-alike" species will also be protected so as to remove any additional threat to the endangered species.

From a distance, all subspecies of Canada geese look alike, varying mostly in size. The Aleutian Canada goose is one of the smaller subspecies, weighing about five pounds. Close up, it can be recognized by a broad white band at the base of the black neck. It is among the world's rarest waterfowl, with only about 800 known to exist in the wild.

The closed areas were determined from the Aleutian Canada geese migratory habits. In the three northwestern California counties, the geese are the most prevalent during the fall and spring migrations, but some remain in these coastal counties through the winter. During the fall, most of the geese will be found in the upper Sacramento Valley before they move south to spend the winter in the Grasslands area of the San Joaquin Valley.

The Aleutian Canada geese nest only on uninhabited 5,000-acre Buldir Island in the western Aleutian Islands, Alaska. They once nested on other islands of the Aleutian chain but Arctic foxes introduced many years ago for fur production wiped them out. The flock at Buldir survived because the island was too remote to introduce foxes.

A recovery team has been formed to bring these geese back to a sustaining population. The team's first objective is to give the geese protection during the migration and wintering period. The second goal is to reestablish an aggregate of 100 nesting pairs of geese on two additional islands. The islands being considered are Agattu and Amchitka. Foxes on Amchitka have been removed, and control work on Agattu has reduced the population there.

When the additional 100 nesting pairs have been established, the geese would no longer be in danger of extinction and could be moved to the less precarious "threatened" category. With the eventual establishment of one more breeding flock on a third island, the bird's wild population could be considered secure and it might then be removed from the "threatened" list. All of the uninhabited islands being considered for reintroduction of geese are within the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge that is proposed for wilderness status.

A number of actions are necessary to reach these goals. The first requires increased production of Aleutian Canada geese in captivity. In 1963 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service transferred 18 goslings from Buldir to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland. These goslings were the base of a captive breeding flock that now numbers 18 breeding pairs. Over 200 Aleutian geese have been produced in captivity. In the spring of 1971, 75 of these geese were released on Amchitka Island. They were observed for 6 weeks and were last seen heading west. Their fate is still unknown.

In the summer of 1974, 41 more of the Patuxent geese were released on Agattu, once the site of one of the largest wild flocks. A group of wild geese from Buldir were placed on Agattu to lead the Patuxent birds

south during migration. Some of these released birds made it south, as two of them were recovered in California.

To produce enough birds for introduction to the wild will require the establishment of a second captive breeding flock. A second site is now being considered. Birds will be hatched at Patuxent and the new site. At the age of 6 months they will be transferred to holding pens in the western Aleutians at a site to be selected. When they reach breeding age (2 to 3 years old), they will be released on Amchitka and Agattu.

By moving them to the Aleutians at an early age, they will acclimate to the surroundings in which they will eventually breed. Wild birds from Buldir will be placed with these geese to guide them south until the introduced birds have established their own migratory tradition. The next transplant from the captive flock will be moved to the Aleutians by the summer of 1976.

The third action proposed is removal of Arctic foxes from other selected nesting islands. Fox removal is necessary if the reintroduction of geese throughout the Aleutians Islands is to succeed. Since the foxes are introduced species on most of the Aleutians, and their introduction caused the decline of the geese, their eradication presents no ecological conflict. Also, the fur economy no longer makes trapping the Arctic fox profitable.

As these various programs succeed, the Aleutian Canada goose will once again take its place as a viable resource of the Pacific Flyway.

RICHARDSON BAY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY: (376 Greenwood Beach Road via Greenwood Cove Road, Tiburon.)

The following is a list of the programs that will be held at the Sanctuary during the coming month. All programs begin at 3:00 PM, Sunday afternoons.

- February 1 - Vanishing Birds; a film about the California Condor and its present day status.
- February 8 - Harbor Seals; a lecture illustrated by slides, presented by the National Audubon's South San Francisco Bay Sanctuaries warden, Lyman Fancher.
- February 15 - Otters; Clowns of the Sea; a delightful color film about the inimitable sea otters of Monterey Bay.
- February 22 - Tripping With Terwilliger; a festival of films about Marin County's favorite naturalist, Elizabeth Terwilliger.
- February 29 - Last Days of the Dolphin; a beautiful film sponsored by the Environmental Defense Fund concerning the dolphin/tuna controversy.
- March 7 - Life Story of the Hummingbird; a beautifully photographed film about this exquisite bird.

A two-hour nature walk for beginners is also conducted every Sunday beginning at 9:00 AM.

Sanctuary admission for these activities is free to Audubon members, 50¢ for non-members.

A special 3-day trip to Eagle Lake, northwest of Susanville, will be conducted by Phil Schaeffer June 4-6. More details in the March bulletin.

FIELD TRIP REPORT:

Foster City Bayside January 17, 1976 Leaders: Nancy Horn
Nancy Huff

Thirty children, teen-agers and adults came out to explore the bayside and its inhabitants. The children were introduced to discoveries to come by use of a "Mystery Box" filled with shells (shot-gun and shellfish), whelk egg-cases, feathers and other items gleaned from the area. Birds and their eating habits were explained through use of "Pot Bellied" bird, a remarkable creature with the ability to change beaks and feet by a series of wheel patterns.

Use of binoculars, field guides, general birding techniques were discussed. The total number of bird species was fifteen. We concentrated on distinguishing size and "what" the birds were doing so the beginners could use their guides effectively. Other shellbank discoveries included a grebe tangled in a six pack plastic carrier and a sand dab.

This program of marsh exploration and bird watching was so enjoyed by the participants an expedition to Pescadero Marsh is planned for Saturday, February 7 at 9:00 AM. We'll be meeting in the parking area on the ocean side of the highway. An invitation to join this group is extended to all new and beginning birders.

DECAL:

A program of the California Department of Fish and Game to provide funds for the enhancement of nongame birds, fish and animals. DECAL is the non-hunters answer to the claim that all wildlife conservation is funded from hunting and fishing license fees. Send your check for \$5.00 or more payable to DECAL TO: DECAL, Box D.F.G., Sacramento, CA 95801.

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